United Nations UNW/2018/1

Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Distr.: General
4 April 2018
English
Original: Arabic/Chinese/English/French/Russian/Spanish

Annual session of 2018
19 and 20 June 2018
Item 1 of the provisional agenda
Organisational matters

Report on the election of the Bureau, 12 January, and on the first regular session, 13 February 2018

I. Election of the Bureau

1. On 12 January 2018, the Executive Board elected four out of five members of the Bureau of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) for 2018. The Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the United Nations, H.E. Ms. Ivana Pajević, was elected as President of the Executive Board for the year 2018. The Vice-Presidents were elected from the following regional groups: (a) African Group: Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Zambia to the United Nations, Ms. Christine Kalamwina; (b) Asia-Pacific Group: Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Sangwook Kang; (c) Latin American and Caribbean Group: Attaché at the Permanent Mission of Panama to the United Nations, Ms. Desirée Cedeño.

2. The Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, Mr. Saud Alshamsi, congratulated the incoming President and thanked the Executive Board on behalf of the outgoing President H.E. Ms. Lana Zaki Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates).

II. Organisational matters

3. The first regular session of 2018 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) was held at the United Nations Headquarters, New York on 13 February 2018.

4. The Executive Board elected the fifth Vice-President, Mr. Jyrki Terva, Minister Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations, for the Western European and Others Group. Mr. Joo Il Lee, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, was elected to replace Mr. Sangwook Kang.

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5. The Executive Board adopted the annotated provisional agenda and workplan of the first regular session of 2018 (UNW/2018/L.1) and adopted the report on the second regular session of 2017, held on 29 to 30 August 2017 (UNW/2017/11). The Executive Board approved the provisional agenda and workplan for the annual session of 2018, to be held on 19 and 20 June 2018 (see Annex I) and adopted the annual workplan 2018 (see Annex II).

6. One Member State asked the Secretariat if an opportunity to further dialogue on the internalisation of the audit function and its link with independent evaluation within UN-Women would be on the agenda of the annual session of 2018, or if supplemental information would be included in the UN-Women audit report to be presented at the annual session.

7. Two Member States, referring to the Report on cost recovery in Item 3 on Financial, budgetary and administrative matters in the provisional agenda and workplan of the annual session of 2018, reminded the Secretariat of paragraph 11 of Decision 2017/2, requesting UN-Women to present evidence-based proposals for its harmonised cost-recovery policies for consideration by the Executive Board "no later" than the annual session of 2018.

8. The Secretariat confirmed that there will be an opportunity to engage in further discussion on the internalisation of the audit function.

9. The Secretariat assured Member States that UN-Women is working closely with sister agencies to meet the requests of the Executive Board to provide evidence-based proposals in the cost-recovery report presented at the Annual Session 2018.

III. Opening statements

10. In her opening statement, the President of the Executive Board Ambassador Ivana Pajević expressed gratitude for her election, noting that the opportunity represents an honour for her country and herself. The President also congratulated the Vice-Presidents on their respective elections.

11. The President reminded Member States that societies are stronger when women and girls' rights are respected and when they are empowered to take leading roles in communities. She added that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are indispensable for the eradication of extreme poverty, the promotion of sustainable development, and generating success across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

12. The President asserted that increasing the political participation of women, combating violence against women, and the economic empowerment of women are the focus of the Montenegrin government's national policy on gender equality. The President added that her country has made significant progress on gender equality since 2007, creating a functioning legal and institutional framework based on European standards.

13. Looking ahead, the President outlined several events of interest to the Executive Board taking place in 2018. Throughout the year, UN-Women will present on its work at the country level in Haiti, Tanzania and Iraq, which will provide an opportunity for Member States to inquire about the operational response of the Entity. The President noted the upcoming joint field visit of the Executive Boards, as well as the UN-Women specific field visit, highlighting her own positive experiences during the Nepal and India visits last year.

14. In closing, the President underscored her commitment to making the 2018 UN-Women Executive Board even more engaging, collaborative and effective, and

assured that she will work in close cooperation with the Boards of sister agencies in line with the Secretary-General's reforms of the UN development system.

15. In her opening remarks, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, congratulated President Pajević for assuming her new role at the helm of UN-Women's Executive Board, underscoring her positive contribution as Vice-President to the Executive Board in 2017. She highlighted that Ambassador Pajević's Presidency reflects Montenegro's commitment to gender equality. She congratulated the Vice-Presidents on their recent elections. Finally, she thanked Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh for her leadership as President of the Executive Board in 2017.

16. Referring to the Secretary-General's repositioning of the UN development system, the head of the Entity highlighted the success in achieving full gender parity among the 44 members of the UN Senior Management group. Underlining that this achievement was reached in one year, she affirmed that positive change can be made in a narrow timeframe when adopting a top-down approach.

17. Welcoming the common chapter of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, the head of the Entity informed the Executive Board that UN-Women, in collaboration with sister agencies, is implementing the commitments outlined in the chapter in two ways: firstly, by drafting clear, flexible guidance to country offices for using existing mechanisms, processes and programmatic activities to drive collaboration while avoiding duplication; and secondly, by examining ways of increasing development impact through greater collaborative advantage, making full use of existing collective programmatic footprint, expertise, operational assets, and complementary mandates.

18. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director then addressed the subject of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021. She informed the Executive Board that planning systems have been adapted to ensure that all UN-Women offices are aligned with the Strategic Plan, and that the Entity has conducted an annual work planning exercise to examine the first year of implementation in practical detail. She also noted that UN-Women has acted to plan and measure performance against the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 by setting up an online scorecard to enhance transparency and communicating results, validating data in the result framework, and instituting mechanisms to ensure that programming is focused on leaving no one behind in both policy and programmatic work.

19. The head of the Entity informed the Executive Board that UN-Women has put into action the Executive Board's decision in August 2017 to create an oversight office in the consolidation of internal audit and evaluation functions, and has assured Member States that the evaluation function continues to be independent in both organisational and functional aspects.

20. She announced that UN-Women's total revenue, from both core and non-core resources, has reached $355 million in 2017. She noted, however, that UN-Women is still experiencing a shortfall of $115 million against the projected $470 million in the integrated budget.

21. The head of the Entity announced that UN-Women would launch a new global report on 14 February 2018, "Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", to track progress towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

22. The head of Entity paid tribute to Ms. Lakshmi Puri, the former Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of UN-Women who left the agency in December 2017. In this regard, she added that recruitment for the new Assistant Secretary-General was underway.

23. Turning to the agenda for the first regular session of 2018, the head of the Entity highlighted the important role of innovation for advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. She noted that UN-Women is implementing proofs of concept using blockchain technology to provide women with access to finance, markets, and innovation, as well as using mobile technology to provide women and girls with access to education and the means to prevent violence. She added that in February 2018, UN-Women held its first Blockchain Live Simulation event, where member states, the UN, civil society and private sector partners reviewed seven blockchain solutions for women in humanitarian contexts.

24. The head of the Entity highlighted UN-Women's efforts to strengthen collaboration and partnerships with sister agencies, the private sector and civil society. These efforts included joint town hall meetings and joint statements with UNDP, UNFPA and UNESCO, as well as chairing joint programmes for collaborative effectiveness, such as the partnership with UNAIDS.

25. She welcomed region-wide initiatives on ending violence against women and girls, like the European Union's "Spotlight" initiative, where UN-Women will host the secretariat on its behalf. In addition, she announced that UN-Women will be implementing a joint programme with the ILO in the ASEAN region for action against trafficking in persons, including for the purpose of sexual and labour exploitation. She thanked Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Argentina and Mexico for their collaboration in action against femicide in the Latin American region.

26. In closing, the head of the Entity called for UN-Women and the Executive Board to connect with the "MeToo" and "Time's Up" movements to provide solidarity and ensure relevance as power structures and inequalities that allowed many people to sexually harass and intimidate women and girls with impunity are being universally challenged. She acknowledged that the UN, like other institutions with strong power dynamics and hierarchical structures, is vulnerable to situations of sexual harassment and violence. She highlighted the Secretary-General's "zero tolerance" plan for action, and called for Member States and UN-Women to take it into consideration moving forward. Finally, she urged men in the UN system to take part in changing the organisational culture that enables harassment and impunity.

IV. Briefings

A. Briefing on UN-Women's follow-up to recommendations of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board

27. The UN-Women Policy Adviser on HIV/AIDS presented on UN-Women's follow-up to recommendations of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board. Following a short video presentation, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director offered introductory remarks highlighting UN-Women's role in combating HIV and AIDS among women and girls.

28. In her remarks, the head of the Entity stressed that eliminating gender inequality and supporting women's empowerment are critical prerequisites to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic. As an example, she cited a UNAIDS study which showed that one of the main epidemic drivers for girls aged between 15 and 19 years is older adult men who are infecting those lacking the power to negotiate safer sex or refuse sex. She added that, as a result, young women account for 74% of new infections in Eastern Africa and 91% of new infections in Southern Africa. She argued that such a link demonstrates that combating HIV/AIDS is strongly tied to gender inequality.

29. The head of the Entity underscored UN-Women's strong history of partnership with UNAIDS, noting that UN-Women joined UNAIDS as a cosponsoring organisation in 2012. She added that she was pleased to chair the UNAIDS Committee of Cosponsoring Organisations (CCO) in 2017, and to have been a member of the Global Review Panel that UNAIDS has requested to establish. Finally, she was pleased to have been requested to co-lead, with the Executive Director of UNAIDS, the development of a global compact on ending all forms of stigma and discrimination.

30. UN-Women's Policy Adviser on HIV/AIDS highlighted critical data on the gender dimensions of HIV. In 2016, 52% of people living with HIV were women. Globally, in 2016, women constituted nearly half of all new HIV infections. Furthermore, in Sub-Saharan Africa, adolescent girls and young women make up 67% of new infections.

31. The presentation then addressed UN-Women's role in its partnership with UNAIDS. The Entity is primarily focused on ensuring that gender equality influences governance in the HIV response. In this regard, UN-Women supported the successful integration of gender equality issues and HIV strategies in 21 countries, including strengthening the capacities of national HIV/AIDS coordinating authorities.

32. UN-Women works on enhancing the leadership and participation of women and girls in decision-making roles in the HIV response, particularly by building the institutional capacities of networks of women living with HIV. This has strengthened the HIV response in over 39 countries. UN-Women has undertaken a global review to uncover key barriers to women's access to HIV treatment. This review has highlighted several existing issues, such as the scarcity of existing data on women's experiences with HIV treatment and violence against women acting as a major barrier to women seeking care and treatment.

33. The presentation also provided an update on the implementation of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board decisions. Due to reduced resources for the joint programme at the 39th meeting of the UNAIDS Board, UNAIDS and the CCO created a global review panel and developed an action plan which provided a new allocation model — this model would provide a minimum allocation of $2 million per year to all cosponsors at the global level, with the remaining $22 million decided at the country level. These country envelopes ensured that programme support is tailored to meet individual country needs. UN-Women received the smallest allocation, which meant that the Entity had to decrease its presence in certain countries, as well as reduce the number of supported networks of women living with HIV.

34. In terms of UN-Women's contributions to the implementation of the decisions, the Entity successfully advocated for the use of gender markers to determine country allocations in addressing social and structural drivers of the HIV epidemic, including gender norms. UN-Women's Strategic Plan 2018–2021 includes key indicators focusing on gender equality and national action plans for HIV.

35. Numerous delegations took the floor in response to the briefing and the opening remarks made by the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director and the President of the Executive Board. Speakers congratulated the President and Vice-Presidents for their election and expressed their support for their work throughout the year. Member States expressed their gratitude towards the commitment and work of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women, pledged their support for UN-Women in the implementation of the new Strategic Plan 2018–2021, and reaffirmed the importance of close collaboration between UN-Women and the Executive Board. One delegation expressed their appreciation towards the strong contribution made by the Assistant-Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director Lakshmi Puri during her tenure.

36. UN-Women was encouraged to implement the Strategic Plan effectively and make gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls a reality, particularly at the country level. Effort must be made in all sectors to seize the momentum in achieving the ambitious targets of the Strategic Plan. In addition, it was noted that UN-Women normative and coordination roles, in accordance with its triple mandate, need to be safeguarded. Changing discriminatory norms and legislation plays a crucial role in making a difference. Two speakers underlined the importance of including women and girls with disabilities in the work.

37. In the context of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, Member States marked the Common Chapter as a basis to define priorities for collective work and leaving no one behind. One delegation noted that they would seek an evaluation of the implementation of the Common Chapter.

38. To ensure the effective delivery of the Strategic Plan, it was noted that UN-Women needs a sustainable inflow of flexible funding. UN-Women's efforts in closing the funding gap were congratulated, and a delegation noted that the increase in funding was the result of the effective partnerships that the Entity has created. Some delegations pledged their continuing financial support and encouraged others to join.

39. Speaking on behalf of seven other delegations, one delegation encouraged UN-Women to be transparent with the Executive Board on the rollout of the change-management process, including any plans to revise relevant policies. Specifically, they requested assurances that: the independence of evaluation will be retained; evaluations will remain consistent with the standards and norms of the UN Evaluation Group, and; the new audit function will coordinate closely with the Office of Investigation and Oversight.

40. Numerous Member States were welcoming of UN-Women's presentation on HIV/AIDS, and commended UN-Women for its coordinated efforts with UNAIDS in tackling the HIV/AIDS epidemic. One Member State acknowledged that gender-based violence, sexual violence and a lack of education opportunities represent major barriers preventing women and girls from receiving HIV treatment. Another Member State highlighted its domestic progress in advancing comprehensive sexual education for its citizens, noting that promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights is key to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

41. Welcoming UN-Women's efforts to integrate HIV/AIDS considerations into its work given budgetary challenges, a Member State requested further information on the implementation of the UNAIDS 2016–2017 Strategy.

42. One Member State, recognising the importance of UN-Women's work in tackling the HIV/AIDS epidemic, requested that UN-Women's programmes do not serve to substitute UNAIDS and World Health Organisation (WHO) programmes.

43. Various delegations mentioned the Secretary-General's repositioning of the United Nations Development System process and saw it as a key opportunity to strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment in the United Nations system. It was noted that a more strategic approach to gender mainstreaming is required and that UN-Women should be an integral part of the reform process, working together with sister agencies and fully utilising its coordination role. Thus, Member States looked forward to more progress on coordination across United Nations agencies. A delegation urged UN-Women to align its strategic planning and business model with the outcome of the reforms, once agreed by Member States.

44. The Secretary-General's Gender Parity Strategy was highlighted by many delegations as a welcomed first step to achieving gender equality in the United Nations. Member States have been active in championing this initiative, for example,

through the cross-regional Group of Friends for Gender Parity. However, more needs to be done to make gender parity a reality. In this regard, the United Nations should enhance its gender-analysis capabilities, including statistics disaggregated by sex. Leadership and accountability are key issues in work. One delegation noted that while attaining gender parity at all levels in the United Nations was important, equitable geographic distribution should also be taken into consideration.

45. There was wide agreement with the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director's remark that there is historical momentum for changing the culture of sexual harassment and ending impunity. In this respect, Member States commended the Secretary-General's declared zero tolerance five-step action plan. The United Nations system, including UN-Women, is expected to have robust systems and processes in place to prevent sexual harassment and abuse and to fully investigate complaints, as well as provide the best possible support and protection for those affected.

46. The importance of UN-Women's work in eradicating violence against women and gender related killings, including femicide, was underlined by many speakers. While much needs to be done in all regions, work has already contributed to changing mindsets. In addition to the effects of violence on women and girls, its heavy cost for economies was also pointed out. UN-Women was encouraged to further strengthen its efforts and to utilise the evidence emerging from the UN Trust Fund to drive effective action.

47. Many delegations highlighted their domestic efforts at closing the gender pay gap, including in engaging with the private sector on the issue. One delegation highlighted the Equal Pay Coalition (EPIC), a joint effort to achieve pay equality.

48. In the context of the devastating cyclone that hit several countries, including Sao Tome, Tonga, Fiji and Samoa, some delegations underlined that women and girls face heightened risks in humanitarian emergencies, and that humanitarian programming must be gender responsive. One delegation opined that there is an increasing need for UN-Women's work in peace, security and humanitarian fields. UN-Women's LEAP programme (Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection in Crises Response) was singled out as a good model for this work. Regarding peace and security work, it was noted that women peace activists should be viewed and promoted as agents of change and peacebuilders in their societies. One delegation commended UN-Women for its unique ability to build and consolidate networks of women mobilising for peace.

49. Referring to the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, some delegations also touched upon the importance of work on STEM. UN-Women was encouraged to engage in global advocacy to increase women's visibility and agency in science and technology.

50. Some delegations also looked forward to the Commission on the Status of Women with its main theme on "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls" and committed to working together with other Member States and UN-Women for a successful outcome.

51. The Director of the UNAIDS Liaison Office in New York took the floor to commend UN-Women for its chairing of the Committee of Cosponsoring Organisations in 2017, which led to the development of an Action Plan to refine the operating model of the Joint Programme. He thanked UN-Women for maintaining their programmes on HIV/AIDS and supporting the UNAIDS 2016–2017 Strategy despite funding restrictions. He expressed confidence that the implementation of the Action Plan will further strengthen collaborative efforts and greatly enhance the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment. Finally, the director noted that the realisation of the SDG target to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030 will not be

achieved without ending the epidemic among women and girls, and is confident that UN-Women's strategic approach will help lead the way to accomplishing this goal.

52. UN-Women's Policy Adviser on HIV/AIDS thanked Member States for their comments and support in combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic among women and girls. In response to questions regarding UN-Women's involvement with the Global Prevention Coalition, the Policy Adviser indicated that the Entity assisted in the development of a roadmap, and worked closely with UNFPA to address issues of education and raising awareness of negotiating safer sex. UN-Women is also considering linking its programmatic initiatives with the EU/UN Spotlight initiative to address ending violence against women in the Eastern and Southern African region.

53. In response to a member state's concerns with the use of the terminology "gender transformative interventions", the Policy Adviser on HIV/AIDS indicated that while the term did not appear in the 2016 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, the term was used in the background paper to address the issue of transforming discriminatory gender norms.

54. The Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director, Mr. Yannick Glemarec, elaborating on the relationship between the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 and the reform of the UN development system, stated that UN-Women is integrating QCPR recommendations in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Furthermore, he assured Member States that all key directions from the Secretary-General's report would be reflected in the Strategic Plan's implementation.

55. Addressing the importance of the common chapter, he informed Member States that UN-Women and its sister agencies have been meeting on a regular basis to operationalise the common chapter. As a first step, UN Funds and Programmes looked into implementing the Spotlight initiative to end violence against women at the country level through joint programmes and using it as a blueprint for future joint initiatives.

56. The ASG assured member states that UN-Women enhanced its planning process, ensuring coherence among country offices and departments as the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 is translated into action. The document has been broken down into four years, with defined objectives across all countries, further broken down into individual performance plans.

57. Finally, the ASG assured member states that UN-Women is fully committed to maintaining the independence of the evaluation office and that it continues to follow UNDG standards.

B. Briefing on innovation strategy for accelerating efforts towards gender equality and the empowerment of women

58. The Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director led the presentation on innovations, one of the key drivers of change in the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021. With current capacities and knowledge, the 2030 agenda cannot be achieved by the set time, unless trends are changed. Change is not impossible and it can be done through innovations. However, innovations do not necessarily benefit men and women alike. Firstly, access to innovations for women facing many pre-existing gender biases might never happen. Secondly, even when women have access to innovations, the innovation can be gender-blind. Thirdly, innovation can even entrench gender biases.

59. UN-Women is now working on scaling up technological and financial innovations. The innovation strategy has four main objectives:

1) Awareness and market transformation to make innovations work for women, which is not only an issue of the common good but also a business imperative;

2) Engendering the design of innovations to ensure that gender is considered in all stages of the innovation process, from identifying the innovations to its design and implementation;

3) Increasing the involvement of women innovators to tackle one of the reasons innovations continue to be gender-blind, which is women's underrepresentation in this field;

4) Embedding innovations in all programming to strengthen programme effectiveness and efficiency.

60. The Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director gave an example of exploring mobile applications ("apps") technology. A "Buy from Women" app allows women farmers to map their farms, calculate production, create contracts and accelerate their production and sales. Another example is an ID card for refugee women living in camps which allows women to get access to all UN Services in a coordinated manner. Regarding the accessibility of this technology, he noted that UN multidimensional hubs offer access to electricity and the Internet, and that some of the technology is also accessible through cards instead of mobile phones. UN-Women is also exploring blockchain technology and organised a workshop on the matter in January.

61. UN-Women continues to work together with other UN organisations in creating and supporting innovations and identifying options and solutions. The UN-Women Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director has been invited to be on the Board of the Sustainable Digital Finance Alliance, which seeks to explore how to better align digital finance solutions with sustainable development.

62. In conclusion, the Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director noted that UN-Women is currently in the prototyping phase and will be moving to the piloting phase by the end of this year, with a possibility to shift to the following phase next year.

63. In response, delegations noted the importance of this discussion at the Executive Board and commended UN-Women for having innovations as a key driver of change in the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 and for developing an innovation strategy. Delegations highlighted that this issue is a priority in their countries as women need to be actors, decision-makers, and beneficiaries of innovations as trends need to be broken to accelerate change. There is a need to invest in research and gender-sensitive innovation systems and to ensure that benefits are accessible and available for both women and men. It must be ensured that innovations and technology are addressing women's real needs and are user friendly. A delegation expressed its hope that the implementation will be expanded to many countries. UN-Women was asked how innovations investment capacities are planned to be enhanced.

64. The Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director noted that the current innovation strategy is an overall framework for UN-Women's work on innovation. In addition, UN-Women has prepared more detailed papers on how innovations are embedded in its programming. For example, a technical brief on innovations submitted to the Executive Board in 2016 discusses the impacts of innovations and how to assess their return rate. He also agreed that in addition to promoting gender equality, innovations need to be user friendly. UN-Women works closely with beneficiaries to train them and to ensure that they have full control over the technology they are using.

C. Briefing on the operational response at country level: Haiti

65. The Officer in Charge of the UN-Women Country Office in Haiti outlined the work and priorities of UN-Women and the context of the Country. Several changes have taken place in Haiti, including a change in Government in 2017, as well as the departure of the UN stabilisation mission, MINUSTAH, and the creation of MINUJUSTH, a political mission working on the rule of law and justice in Haiti.

66. UN-Women is currently renewing its Strategic Note in Haiti. The challenges that exist include access to services, resources and opportunities for women as well as the feminisation of poverty. UN-Women works in four priority areas: 1) strengthening institutional and normative frameworks; 2) women's political participation and ending violence against women in this context; 3) access to justice and the rule of law; and 4) women's economic empowerment.

67. UN-Women has also identified three sources of growth. Firstly, UN-Women has provided institutional strengthening and support to the Ministry of Women's Affairs to ensure that gender is mainstreamed throughout the Government. Secondly, UN-Women works on closing the gender gap in agricultural productivity and service delivery. Thirdly, UN-Women works with partners on changing socio-economic systems in an integrated manner. Partnerships allow progress in joint initiatives on the country level.

68. After Hurricane Matthew, UN-Women played an important role in humanitarian efforts, established partnerships to provide women with equal footing, and ensured that gender was integrated at all levels of the humanitarian response.

69. In cooperation with the Government of Haiti, UN-Women played a key role in ensuring a slight growth in women's representation in the Lower Chamber and the Senate, although the percentage of women lawmakers remains low. At the municipal level, women now have more than 30% representation, which is the largest number in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Building upon this, UN-Women will work with the Government of Haiti to ensure that this success is repeated at the parliament level.

70. Regarding the economic empowerment of women, UN-Women has set up a certified training programme for women farmers producing moringa, which is currently in demand at the international level. Haiti is also participating in the innovative "Buy from Women" Platform.

71. On ending violence against women, UN-Women has supported the Government of Haiti in creating a ten-year National Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence, which was finalised in 2017.

72. The representative from the Permanent Mission of Haiti expressed his gratitude to UN-Women for the work done in Haiti in coordinating gender equality programmes and for the support to the Government of Haiti in gender mainstreaming and accelerating strategies to enhance women's participation in political decision-making at all levels. The representative noted that gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution of Haiti, and that the Government has also established a quota of 30% in decision-making positions. However, female representation in elected positions remains low and requires continued measures. The Haitian Government welcomed the quality and constructive partnership with UN-Women and applauded the tangible results achieved on the ground and, in addition, extended its gratitude to partner countries for their solidarity and financial and technical support. While significant progress has been made in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women, the Speaker noted that there is still work to be done, and encouraged

UN-Women to continue to support the priorities of the Haitian Government at all levels.

V. Closing

73. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director thanked the President for her efficient leadership throughout the session, as well as the Vice-Presidents for their contributions before and during the meeting. She thanked Member States for their statements, including the questions and issues they raised throughout the session. The head of the Entity reflected on several of the concerns raised by Member States, including combating sexual exploitation and abuse within the UN system. She also thanked Member States for their positive reception of UN-Women's presentation on the follow-up to recommendations of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, and remarked that despite limited resources, UN-Women was able to reach a significant number of women and girls who are affected by HIV and AIDS.

74. The President thanked the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director for her closing remarks and expressed her deep appreciation for UN-Women's work in Haiti, as well as the hands-on experience delegates took part in with UN-Women's innovations. The President expressed enthusiasm at seeing UN-Women's first steps in implementing the new Strategic Plan 2018–2021 amid the reform of the UN development system, and expressed appreciation of UN-Women's actions in operationalising the common chapter together with sister agencies. In closing, the President thanked her fellow Bureau members, the Executive Board Secretary and his team for their effective and unwavering support.

Annex I

Provisional workplan

Day	*Time*	*Item*	*Subject*
Tuesday, 19 June	10 a.m.–1 p.m.		Opening of the session
			• Statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women
		1	Organisational matters
			• Adoption of the annotated provisional agenda and workplan for the annual session of 2018
			• Adoption of the report on the first regular session of 2018
		2	Annual Report of the Executive Director
			• Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on progress made on the Strategic Plan 2014–2017
			Informal consultations on draft decisions
	3 p.m.–6 p.m.		Annual Report of the Executive Director (*continued*)
			Informal consultations on draft decisions
Wednesday, 20 June	10 a.m.–1 p.m.	3	Financial, budgetary and administrative matters
			• Report on cost recovery
		4	Evaluation
			• Report on the evaluation function, 2017
			• Corporate evaluation of UN-Women's contribution to political participation and leadership
			• Management response
			Informal consultations on draft decisions
	3 p.m.–6 p.m.	5	Audit matters
			• Report on the internal audit and investigation activities for the period 1 January to 31 December 2017
			• Report of the Audit Advisory Committee
			• Management responses
			• Management response to Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) reports issued in 2017
			• Briefing on the establishment of the in-house internal audit function
			Briefing on UN-Women operational response at the country level: Tanzania

Day	*Time*	*Item*	*Subject*
		6	Other matters
			Adoption of draft decisions
		1	Organisational matters
			Approval of the provisional agenda and workplan for the second regular session of 2018
			Closing of the session
			• Statements by the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women and the President of the Executive Board